Imagine a world without technology. Email, Twitter and Facebook have become inherent elements that saturate the very fiber of our culture, and imagining a day without these is almost impossible. In his essay “*Why I am NOT Going to Buy a Computer,*” Wendell Berry challenges society’s dependence on energy and expressly the personal computer. Berry’s essay establishes his belief that technology acts as a crutch to civilization, thus handicapping those who choose to rely on computers. Berry’s assertion that technological innovation does not promote progress is, in essence, an illogical argument.

Initially, Berry argues that he wishes to be a friend to the environment, and chooses to write with pencil and paper during the daylight. He insists that using electricity demonstrates a voluntary support for the energy companies and their initiatives. Berry states “How could I write conscientiously against the rape of nature if I were, in the act of writing, Implicated in the rape?” In essence Berry is using inflammatory language to evoke a strong response. He also assumes that the craft of writing will be adversely affected through the advent of technology. He offers Dante as a model of exemplary writing constructed without the use of a computer. Although he later acknowledges the possibility of similar writing quality today, he remains steadfast in his convictions.

It is clear Berry’s mind is made up. However, obstinacy is not proof of legitimacy. Although he offers a few plausible arguments, his position is extreme and not mainstream, therefore flawed. The idea that abstaining from technology applies universally is unrealistic. His tactical position is vehemently contrary to popular opinion. It seems as if he relishes being controversial.

Berry concludes his essay with a list of his criteria for technological innovation. His criteria are absurd, contradictory, and frankly, impossible to fulfill. Berry seems to view technological advances as an imposition rather than an advantage or an opportunity. For example, one of his criterions is that “the new tool be cheaper than the one it replaces,” and another is that “the new tool be demonstrably better than the previous edition.” The two ideas juxtapose one another. It seems that the criteria are destined to condemn technological innovation on every level.

The idea that technological innovation institutes progress is a foreign concept to Wendell Berry. Berry seeks independence from energy corporations and wishes to divorce himself from the effects of strip-mining and other environmental issues. While this is a noble endeavor, it is not realistic. As a writer his only concern is for his craft. While most people anticipate new technology and even sometimes view it as a necessity, Berry construes this to be a problem. In an effort to offer environmental solutions, Berry has withdrawn from society and taken an extreme position. Interestingly, since the publication of this essay, corporations have continued to produce massive amounts of technology, and consumers have continued to demand it.